



OFF DUTY



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Friday - Sunday, July 19 - 21, 2013 WSJ.com/lifestyle

MADE IN MILAN
Italian style at its very best

silk lining

Hidden seams

Canvas patterns

To appreciate fine Milanese tailoring is not to notice it at all. Following the contours of the body with exacting precision, the best Italian suits allow you to move freely and comfortably. The only thing that might make you feel uncomfortable will be all the eyes on you. "Italian tailoring is about making you look good," second-generation tailor Andrea Campagna says.

These family-run businesses are also all about making you feel good. Each client has his own serial number and a file recording measurements and other critical details. On visits to the atelier, dozens of tailors are on hand to cater to your every need. "A client may come in having put on 10 pounds," says Mr. Campagna. "This obviously affects the measurements and the cut. But no one wants to be reminded, so you have to imply the fault is on your end."

No wonder the name of a good tailor is often guarded like a state secret, whispered about in backrooms between friends and passed down through generations. The secret's out—here's our guide to the best Milan has to offer. >> **WB**

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STYLE & FASHION



Luca Rubinacci

RUBINACCI

This third-generation family business is run by Mariano Rubinacci and his 31-year-old son Luca, who is frequently snapped by fashion photographers like the Sartorialist's Scott Schuman. Luca's dapper dress sense has helped put the company, established in the early 19th century, firmly on the modern tailoring map.

His motto, passed down from his grandfather, is: "A jacket has to be big inside and tight outside"—comfortable but still shapely. Rubinacci doesn't use canvas or much padding, meaning their suits feel like a second skin. "It's good for a lawyer but not a naval officer," says Luca, who might mix burgundy velvet loafers and denim shirts with his suits.

The tailor, which also has shops in London, Naples, New York, Rome and Tokyo, doesn't put a label inside its suits.

"It's up to the customer to decide whether they want the brand to be known," says Luca Rubinacci, whose clients include Bryan Ferry, Ferrari Chairman Luca Cordero di Montezemolo and entrepreneur Lapo Elkann. *From €4,500*

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Chris Ingram/Gallery for The Wall Street Journal (3)

MADE-TO-MEASURE The Rubinacci atelier

N. H. SARTORIA

"I grew up in a family where elegance matters," says owner Federico Ceschi, an Italian nobleman who is the principal model of his clothing range.

N.H. Sartoria reflects his aristocratic upbringing and tastes. (So does its name: The N.H. stand for Nihil Homo, or noble man.) It is a discreet business where you will never find pictures of famous people hanging on fitting-room walls. "My clients come here looking for privacy," Mr. Ceschi says. He founded the firm in 2003 with master tailor Domenico Bombino, whom he met while working for fashion designer Mila Schön.

Mr. Ceschi's guiding principle is that "a jacket has to be more charming inside than outside." Jackets, crafted by Mr. Bombino's expert hands, are unlined—apart from sleeves and upper shoulders—which means the suit doesn't wrinkle. The slightly bohemian cut reflects the style of Mr. Bombino, who in his early years worked with artists like Gianni Dova. *From €2,500*

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nhsartoria.it



Federico Ceschi, right, and Domenico Bombino



Gianni Campagna, left, and his son Andrea

GIANNI CAMPAGNA

A master tailor and businessman, Gianni Campagna cut his teeth at Domenico Caraceni before opening his own atelier in 1966. Fifteen years ago, after time in the corporate world, he bought Palazzo Bernasconi to house a new boutique, where he now works with his son Andrea (who also has his own label, MMX). Though the duo often travel to London, Moscow and L.A., many of their clients still have their suits—sometimes entire wardrobes—made here.

Campagna is a jet-set favorite and a darling of Hollywood, having created suits for Jack Nicholson and Sharon Stone among many others. (Father and son even appeared in the 1999 remake of "The Thomas Crown Affair"; Pierce Brosnan remains a client.)

The tailor is known for exquisite detailing: hidden seams under the lapel mean you can turn to face the glare of the paparazzi and the jacket sticks to you like Velcro. The lining is always silk and ties extend down to the waistband—one of the firm's characteristic features. *From €4,500*

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THINKER, TAILOR
How to select a suit

Have a clear idea of what sort of look you want before choosing a fabric. Most tailors will suggest styles and cuts, but spell out any preferences beforehand. And it's always worth asking to see sketches of suits they've made for other clients. It takes longer to make a bespoke suit than a Bentley, so allow ample time, especially on your first visit.



WELL SUITED
A custom suit from A.Caraceni